

7 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein the selective hydrogenation conditions of step (c) include use of a reaction product mixture:hydrogen molar ratio of from about 1000:1 to about 1:1, a combined partial pressure of the liquefiable products of the intermediate reaction product mixture and hydrogen of from about 5 bar (5×10^5 Pa) to about 80 bar (8×10^6 Pa), and a temperature in the range of from about 20°C to about 160°C.

8 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein the combined partial pressure of the liquefiable products of the intermediate reaction product mixture and hydrogen in step (c) is from about 25 bar (2.5×10^6 Pa) to about 50 bar (5×10^6 Pa).

9 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein the selective hydrogenation catalyst comprises a metal selected from nickel, palladium, platinum, ruthenium, rhodium and rhenium.

10 (amended). A process according to claim 9, wherein the catalyst comprises ruthenium on carbon.

11 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein the rate of supply of liquefiable liquid products of the intermediate reaction product mixture to the selective hydrogenation zone corresponds to a liquid hourly space velocity (LHSV) of from about 0.5 hr^{-1} to about 2.0 hr^{-1} .

a' 12 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein step (e) comprises supplying material of the selectively hydrogenated reaction product mixture to a first distillation zone maintained under distillation conditions effective for distillation therefrom of a first distillate comprising ethanol, water and ethyl acetate, recovering a first distillate comprising ethanol, water and ethyl acetate from the first distillation zone and a bottom product comprising ethanol and water, supplying material of the first distillate to a second distillation zone maintained under distillation conditions effective for distillation therefrom of a second distillate comprising ethanol, water, and ethyl acetate and so as to yield a substantially pure ethyl acetate bottom product, and recovering a substantially pure ethyl acetate bottom product from the second distillation zone.

13 (amended). A process according to claim 12, wherein the first distillation zone is operated at a pressure of less than about 4 bar (4×10^5 Pa).

14 (amended). A process according to claim 12, wherein the first distillation zone is operated at a pressure of from about 1 bar (10^5 Pa) to about 2 bar (2×10^5 Pa).

15 (amended). A process according to claim 12, wherein the second distillation zone is operated at a pressure of from about 4 bar (4×10^5 Pa) to about 25 bar (2.5×10^6 Pa).

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17 (amended). A process according to claim 12, wherein the first distillate contains less than about 10 mol % water.

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20 (amended). A process according to claim 19, wherein the liquid draw stream contains about 45 mol % ethyl acetate, about

a' 50 mol % ethanol, about 4 mol % water and about 1 mol % other components.

21 (amended). A process according to claim 18, wherein the liquid draw stream is passed to the second distillation zone which is operated at a pressure of from about 4 bar (4×10^5 bar) absolute to about 25 bar (2.5×10^6 Pa) absolute.

22 (amended). A process according to claim 21, wherein the bottom product from the second distillation zone contains from about 99.8 mol % to about 99.95 mol % ethyl acetate.

23 (amended). A process according to claim 20, wherein the second distillate comprises the overhead stream from the second distillation zone and is returned to the first distillation zone.

24 (amended). A process according to claim 23, wherein the overhead stream from the second distillation zone contains about 25 mol % ethyl acetate, about 68 mol % ethanol, about 6 mol % water, and about 1 mol % of other components.

25 (amended). A process according to claim 23, wherein the overhead stream from the second distillation zone is returned to the first distillation zone at a point above the feed point of the liquefiable products of the selectively hydrogenated reaction product mixture.

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26 (amended). A process according to claim 18, wherein in step
(f) the ethanol rich stream recovered from the bottom of the
first distillation zone is subjected to treatment for the removal
of water therefrom thereby to produce a relatively dry ethanol
5 stream suitable for recycle to step (a).

27 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein the
relatively dry ethanol stream of step (f) is recycled to step
(a).

28 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein step (e)
comprises extractive distillation with an extractive agent
comprising polyethylene glycol and dipropylene glycol, diethylene
glycol, or triethylene glycol.

29 (amended). A process according to claim 1, wherein step (e)
comprises extractive distillation in the presence of an
extractive agent containing dimethyl sulphoxide.